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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07 TRSE-00
MCT-01 OMB-01 /074 W
----------031041Z 051486 /21
O R 030915Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7717
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR GER
CINCUSAFE
USDOCSOUTH ANPLES
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 4260

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJ: ALLEGED ASSASSINATION PLOT AGAINST ECEVIT

1. CONTINUING CAMPAIGN VILENCE AND THE THREAT OF AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AGAINST REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) CHAIRMAN BULENT ECEVIT HAVE INCREASED TENSION THREE DAYS BEFORE THE SCHEDULED JUNE 5 ELECTION.

2. ECEVIT, CAMPAIGNING ALONG THE BLACK SEA COAST JUNE 2, ENCOUNTERED HOSTILE DEMONSTRATORS NEAR RIZE AND ACCORDING
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TO ONE NEWS AGENCY ACCOUNT, GUNFIRE WAS DIRECTED AT THE FINAL VEHICLE IN HIS CONVOY. EARLIER THE SAME DAY, THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BUILDING OF THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) IN ANKARA WAS THE TARGET OF AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE THAT SATTERED 12 WINDOWS. IN SCATTERED LOCAL INCIDENTS, ONE YOUTH WAS KILLED AND ANOTHER RECEIVED SERIOUS RIFLE WOUNDS AS A RESULT OF CLASHES BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT.

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3. THE MAJOR EVENT OF THE DAY WAS THE REVELATION OF AN ALLEGED ASSASSINATION PLOT AGAINST ECEVIT. EARLY MORNING OF JUNE 2, PRIMIN DEMIREL SENT ECEVIT A COURTESY COPY OF A "SECRET AND PRIVATE" LETTER DIRECTED TO THE TURKISH GENERAL STAFF(TGS), THE INTERIOR MINISTRY AND THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. THE LETTER SAID THAT THE PRIMIN'S OFFICE HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT AN UNKNOWN PERSON WOULD ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE ECEVIT DURING HIS SCHEDULED JUNE 3 RALLY IN TAKSIM SQUARE IN ISTANBUL (THE SITE OF THE MAY 1 LABOR UNION RALLY AT WHICH 33 PERSONS DIED). ACCORDING TO DEMIREL'S LETTER, WHICH ECEVIT MADE PUBLIC LATER IN THE DAY, THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT WOULD BE MADE WITH A HIGH POWERED RIFLE, EQUIPPED WITH A TELESCOPE AND FIRED FROM A ROOM ON THE FUPPER FOLLORS OF THE SHERATON HOTEL. DEMIREL SAID THE PLOT HAD BEEN PREPARED BY "ILLEGAL COMMUNIST TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS" WHICH WANTED TO PREVENT THE ELECTIONS. THESE GROUPS HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED, HE SAID, BY THE MAY 1 INCIDENT AND THE MAY 29 INCIDENT IN IZMIR (IN WHICH ONE OF ECEVIT'S ADVISORS WAS WOUNDED WHEN A POLICEMAN APPARENTLY ACCIDENTALLY DISCHARGED A TEAR GAS GRENADE).
DEMIREL CONCLUDED HIS LETTER BY ASKING THAT ALL APPROPRIATE SECURITY MASURES BE TAKEN.
4. LATE EVENING JUNE 2 ECEVIT DEVOTED HIS ALLOCATED 10-MINUTE RADIO CAMPAIGN SPEECH TO THE ASSASSINATION PLOT. HE ACCUSED DEMIREL OF WANTING TO DISRPUT THE ISTANBUL RALLY. HE POINTED TO THE FACT THAT THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION WAS THE PRIMIN'S OFFICE AND NOT THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE AND SUGGESTED THAT DEMIREL WAS DELINQUENT IN NOT HAVING
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ALRADY ARRANGED FOR THE ARREST OF THE WOULD-BE ASSAILANTS. DESPITE DEMIREL'S FFORTS, ECEVIT SAID, THE RALLY WOULD TAKE PLACE AND HE WOULD SPEAK. ECEVIT DRAMATICALLY CONCLUDED HIS STATEMENT BY SAYING THAT HE COULD NOT ASK HIS SUPPORTERS TO COME TO TAKSIM BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL DANGERS INVOVED, BUT THAT HE AND HIS WIFE WOULD BE THERE AT THE SCHEDULED HOUR AND HE WOULD SPEAK. HE THEN APPEALED FOR EVERYONE, EVEN THOSE WHO COULD NOT COME TO THE RALLY, TO GIVE HIM THEIR VOTES ON SUNDAY. "IT IS NOT IMPORTANT THAT I LIVE UNTIL JUNE 5" HE CONTINUED, " WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT DEMOCRACY LIVES AND THAT THE CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND ALL OUR CITIZENS ATTAIN, WITH THESE ELECTIONS, SECURITY OF LIFE AND THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN PEACE. GOD PROTECT OUR NATION."

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5. SECURITY AUTHORITIES HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO PROVIDE NECESSARY SECURITY FOR THE RALLY. THE ISTANBUL GOVERNOR ANNOUNCED THAT A GENDARMERIE REGIMENT AND A COMMANDO DETACHMENT HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO ASSIST IN THE SECURITY EFFORTS. INTERIOR MINISTER OZBEK, AFTER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KORUTURK JUNE 2, ISSUED A STATEMENT NOTING THE TRAGEDY THAT HAD BEEN BROUGH ABOUT BY THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND, POINTING TO THE HIGH STATE OF TENSION IN TURKEY, HE WARNED POLITICAL LEADERS OF THE DANGERS OF EXPOSING THEMSELVES "ON TOP OF A BUS IN THE MIDDLE OF A BIG SQUARE." THE RPP PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATION IN ISTANBUL
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ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAD ASSIGNED 10,000 PARTY REGULARS TO ASSIST IN CROWD MANAGMENT AND DISCIPLINE. IT ALSO ASKED THAT PERSONS ATTENDING THE RALLY CARRY NO SIGNS OR SOLGANS OTHER THAN PICTURE OF ECVIT AND OFFICIAL, APPROVED PARTY SLOGANS.

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6. IN A LATE DEVELOPMENT FURTHER COMPLICATING THE SITUATION
THE ISTANBUL PROVINCIAL ELECTION COUNCIL LATE EVENING JUNE 2
ANNOUNCED THAT AS A RESULT OF AN APPEAL BY THE JP PROVINCIAL
ORGANIZATION, PERMISSION FOR THE RPP RALLY HAD BEEN CANCELLED.
THE BASIS FOR THE JP REQUEST WAS THAT THE RPP RALLY HAD
ORIGINALLY BEEN SCHEDULED FOR MAY 1 AND THE CHANGE TO
JUNE 3 WAS NOT LEGAL. THE RPP IMMEDIATELY APPEALED THE
DECISION TO THE HIGH ELECTION COUNCIL. THE MORNING RADIO
NEWS JUNE 3 QUOTED THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HIGH ECLECTION COUNCIL
AS SAYING THAT THE RPP APPEAL HAD NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED
AND HE COULD NOT SAY WHETHER A DECISION COULD BE TAKEN
IN TIME FOR THE RALLY TO TAKE PLACE AS SCHEDULED EARLY
AFTERNOON JUNE 3. THE NOON RADIO NEWS QUOTED RPP SECGEN
EYUBOGLU AS SAYING THE RALLY WOULD DEFINITELY TAKE PLACE.

7. COMMENT: THE ASSASSINATION PLOT WARNING HAS SEVERAL
CURIOUS ASPECTS: MOST IMPORTANT AS ECEVIT NOTED, LETER INCIATED
THAT THE INFORMATION ABOUT A PLOT APPARENTLY ORIGINATED WITH THE
PRIMIN'S OFFICE RATHER THAN THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR OR THE
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERICE AS WOULD HAVE SEEMED MORE LIKELY.
THIS FACTOR WOULD SEEM TO ADD TO THE PUBLIC CREDIBILITY OF ECEVIT'S
CLAIM THAT DEMIREL IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH DISRUPTING
THE ISTANBUL RALLY. ON THE OTHER HAND, HOWEVER,
THE DEMIREL WARNING--RAGARDLESS OF ITS MOTIVATION--
MUST BE COUNTED A POLITICAL LIABILITY FOR DEMIREL.
IT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY ENHANCE ECEVIT'S HERO
IMAGE JUST TWO DAYS BEFORE ELECTION. MOREOVER, IT HAS
PLACED DEMIREL IN THE UNENVIABLE POSITION OF BEING VULNERABLE
TO CHARGES THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IF SOMETHING SHOULD OCCUR
AT THE TAKSIM RALLY AND CONVERSELY, IF NOTHING SHOULD OCCUR,
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THAT HIS WARNING WAS MERELY DESIGNED TO KEEP PEOPLE AWAY FROM
THE RALLY.

8. AS TO DEMIREL'S MOTIVATION, IT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE THAT
DEMIREL MIGHT RESORT TO SUCH TACTICS TO DISRUPT ECEVIT'S
CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, HE IS A CLEVER POLITICAN AND WOULD
NOT NORMALLY GIVE HIS OPPONENT SUCH A JUICY ISSUE JUST
TWO DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION. WE ARE, THEREFORE, INCLINED
TO BELIEVE THAT DEMIREL WAS TRULY CONCERNED THAT VIOLENCE
MIGHT OCCUR IN ISTANBUL JUNE 3 AND THAT HE WANTED TO BE
ON RECORD AS HAVING TOLD THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES TO TAKE
PRECAUTIONS AND AS HAVING WARNED ECEVIT.

8. BECAUSE OF PROXIMITY OF US CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICES
IN ISTANBUL TO TAKSIM SQUARE, AND ON BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS
OF ISTANBUL SECURITY AUTHROITIES, WE ARE CLOSING CONSULATE
GENERAL FOR A NUMBER OF HOURS ON JUNE 3. DURING THIS PERIOD,

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ONLY MARINES AND A VERY LIMITED NUMBER OF KEY PERSONNEL
WILL BE IN THE BUILDING. IN ADDITION, CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICIALS
HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH HOTELS IN PROXIMITY OF TAKSIM SQUARE ASKING
HOTEL AUTHORITIES TO WARN AMERICANS TO STAY INSIDE OR AWAY FROM
SQUARE. CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICIALS HAVE ALSO BEEN IN TOUCH
WITH ALL AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN AND HAVE MET TWO TOURIST BOATS
(TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 500 AMERICAN PASSENGERS) TO ISSUE
APPROPRIATE
WARNINGS.
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